



NAME: LCDR CHRISTOPHER LAMER

JOB TITLE: CLINICAL APPLICATIONS  
COORDINATOR

AGENCY: INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE (IHS)

## EDUCATION/DEGREES/CERTIFICATES/INSTITUTIONS

LCDR Chris Lamer received his Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy and Pharm.D. degrees from the University of Pittsburgh in 1995 and 1997, respectively. He completed a pharmacy practice residency at Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh and became a Certified Diabetes Educator (CDE). He is recognized as a National Clinical Pharmacy Specialist (NCPS) by the Indian Health Service (IHS) and he is a Board Certified Pharmacotherapy Specialist (BCPS). LCDR Lamer is working to obtain a Masters in Health Sciences degree at Western Carolina University.

## CURRENT JOB DESCRIPTION AND PREVIOUS USPHS ASSIGNMENTS

LCDR Lamer began his career as a staff pharmacist at the Cherokee Indian Hospital in 1998. The IHS provided an environment that gave LCDR Lamer the ability to engage in expanded pharmacy services and enabled him implement collaborative disease state management services such as anticoagulation, tobacco cessation, and kidney clinics. He also had the opportunity to initiate a pharmacy student-training program, which includes over fifteen University agreements, and to establish a Pharmacy Practice Residency program. The versatility of pharmacy practice within the USPHS and IHS is unmatched by most any other organization. LCDR would agree that if you have the time and the energy, you can do almost anything within the IHS.

When the Cherokee Indian Hospital agreed to beta test the Electronic Health Record (EHR) (see <http://www.ihs.gov/CIO/EHR/> for more details), LCDR Lamer accepted a new position called the Clinical Applications Coordinator (CAC). The primary job of the CAC is to implement and maintain the Electronic Health Record (EHR) by serving as an educator and liaison between the clinical staff and information technology departments. The CAC position requires the individual to have a thorough understanding of workflow, data management, and the clinical information system called the Resource and Patient Management System (RPMS). In addition to supporting training, the CAC develops documentation templates and designs ordering menus and guidelines for medications, labs, and other items that are necessary for day-to-day patient care. The CAC also ensures that the hospital staff is using the appropriate diagnostic and procedure codes for purposes of billing.

Implementation of the EHR began at Cherokee Indian Hospital in 2005. The hospital staffs 238 employees that received EHR training to ensure appropriate

documentation for patient care and departmental records (E.g., the Clinical Reporting System, the Diabetes Audit, financial and legal reports). Appropriate documentation is essential at the hospital given that just in the last year, the hospital provided over 70,000 outpatient visits, 900 inpatient discharges, 14,000 emergency room visits, and contractual health care to approximately 13,000 patients in the Cherokee and surrounding communities.

## QUALIFYING SKILLS FOR CURRENT POSITION

The clinical applications coordinator (CAC) works independently, to plan, coordinate and implement projects on schedule. The CAC communicates with peers and supervisors, speaks in front of groups, and writes policies, procedures, and training materials. Knowledge of the hospital environment and the interactions among the various departments within the hospital and affiliated health care systems are essential. The CAC must know the steps involved in the flow of patient information from the time the patient walks in the door until the patient leaves. The position requires several important skills to be successful including those for problem solving, maintaining interpersonal relationships, and conflict resolution. An increasing number of pharmacists are accepting the role of the CAC thereby broadening the practice environment for the pharmacy profession.

## REASONS FOR CHOOSING PHS AS A CAREER

Being a Commissioned Corps officer in the USPHS has enabled LCDR Lamer to fulfill a multitude of interests all within the purview of a single organization. He has the opportunity to provide direct patient care one day and to work with a national committee the next; to engage in an administrative role in the morning and then discuss medication treatment plans with patients in the afternoon. Indeed, this vast array of opportunities cannot generally be achieved within other organizations. Other benefits to working for the USPHS include excellent health care benefits, the opportunity to go back to school under the GI bill, and the ability to fulfill professional goals that could not have been accomplished in the private sector. Finally, he never takes for granted the long-lasting relationships he has made and the chance to work with such an exceptional group of people.

## MOST REWARDING USPHS PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

LCDR Lamer's most rewarding experiences have been the opportunity to work with so many brilliant professionals (pharmacists, physicians, nurses, and others) who are supportive of the practice of pharmacy and work together to achieve a common goal of excellent patient care. He feels that the respect, camaraderie, and professional growth a pharmacist experiences working in the IHS within the USPHS is genuine and unrivaled in other workplace environments.

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS/ACTIVITIES

Over the several years, LDCR Lamer has enjoyed traveling to many areas of the United States to give presentations, to train, and to work as a pharmacy representative with the

following national workgroups: Patient and Family Education Committee, National Clinical Pharmacy Specialist Credentialing Committee, National Pharmacy Council, National Diabetes Treatment Prevention Program, Asthma Management Team, Integrated Care Management Workgroup, and Chronic Disease Workgroup. Working with the IHS enables him to serve on numerous local committees and to volunteer and consult on workgroups such as the Clinical Reporting System. Additionally, LCDR Lamer is a member of CCRF, the Commissioned Officers Association. He is also an Associate Recruiter and Point of Contact for the University of Florida College of Pharmacy.

LCDR Lamer explained that a hot issue pharmacists currently face is both provider recognition and reimbursement for pharmacy service. He feels this is essential for the growth and development of the profession. Fortunately, pharmacists are gaining recognition and the opportunity to be reimbursed for Medication Therapy Management Services is a major achievement. Additionally, the ability to obtain a National Provider Identification number and support for pharmacist provision of Medication Therapy Management services by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) indicates a definite change for the future practice of pharmacy (<https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov/NPPES/Welcome.do>).

#### SPECIAL NOTES OF INTEREST

LCDR Lamer states that his experience with the USPHS, IHS, and Cherokee Indian Hospital "has been nothing short of incredible." Given the chance, "I'd do it all over again." LCDR Lamer's outstanding accomplishments have been recognized when he received the Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service, the Achievement Medal for exemplary performance on duty, and the National IHS Director's Award for participation on the Patient Education team.